

Hog Island Dredging Project Will Remove Contaminants

St. Louis River Area of Concern
Superior, Wisconsin

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For more information

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To learn more about the Great Lakes
Legacy Act, please visit: epa.gov/glla/

Cleanup of Newton Creek and Hog Island Inlet should begin soon, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes National Program Office and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The federal and state agencies recently agreed on the details of the project. Work is expected to begin in mid-June and is likely to be complete by the end of the year.

The \$6.3 million project involves digging up and disposing of 40,000 cubic yards of petroleum-contaminated sediment (mud) and soil from Newton Creek and parts of Hog Island Inlet. That much sediment would cover a football field, and would be 24 feet high.

The banks of the creek and inlet will be landscaped to prevent erosion. The result will be a healthier habitat for fish and other aquatic life, and the inlet will be safe for recreation.



This is an aerial view of the area where contaminated sediment and soil will be removed from Newton Creek and Hog Island Inlet.

Approximately \$4.1 million of the funds to pay for this project are provided by the Great Lakes Legacy Act (see box below). The act authorizes \$270 million over a five-year period to clean up contaminated sediment in Great Lakes toxic hot spots called “areas of concern.” Newton Creek and Hog Island Inlet are part of the St. Louis River AOC. This will be the second Great Lakes Legacy Act project. The first was a project to remove contaminated sediment from Black Lagoon, part of the Detroit River in Trenton, Mich.

The state of Wisconsin and other parties are providing 35 percent of the project’s cost, or about \$2.2 million. These are non-federal matching funds required by the Legacy Act.

Project details

The project calls for removal of contaminated sediment from the final part of Newton Creek – before it reaches Hog Island Inlet – as well as the inlet itself. During the cleanup, the flow of the creek will be diverted. Water in the inlet will be diverted to the St. Louis River or to the city of Superior’s wastewater treatment facility.

The sediment being removed is contaminated with polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, as well as heavy metals. The dredged sediment will be sorted, and anything found to have high levels of lead (over 50 parts per million) will be taken to a licensed landfill.

Once the contaminated sediment is removed, the creek bed will be restored with clean river rock. The creek banks will be stabilized, with foliage and shrubbery

planted to prevent erosion and improve the appearance of the area. The near bank of Hog Island Inlet will also be restored to prevent erosion.

When the cleanup is finished, EPA and Wisconsin DNR will monitor Newton Creek and Hog Island Inlet to ensure the cleanup is effective.

Site history

To organize cleanups, Wisconsin DNR divided Newton Creek into 12 segments in 1994. They are identified as Segment A through Segment L. The creek begins at an impoundment area formed by the wastewater discharge from the Murphy Oil Refinery. The creek flows 1.5 miles through industrial and residential areas to the 17-acre Hog Island Inlet, which is in the southeastern end of Superior Bay.

Pollution in the creek and inlet is primarily caused by PAHs. Other contaminants include oil and grease, mercury, lead, chromium and volatile organic compounds.

Following a thorough study of the contamination’s effects on the ecology, DNR supervised the removal of contaminated sediment from the impoundment area and Segment A in 1997. After additional study, Segments B through K were cleaned up in the summer of 2003.

The last phase is the upcoming cleanup of Segment L of Newton Creek and Hog Island Inlet.

About the Great Lakes Legacy Act

Although discharges of toxic substances into the Great Lakes have been reduced over the last 20 years, high concentrations of pollution remain in the bottom of some rivers and harbors. That poses a potential risk to people and wildlife. As a result, states have issued advisories in most locations around the Great Lakes against eating locally caught fish. The tributaries and harbors identified as having pollution problems are known as “areas of concern,” or AOCs. There are 31 AOCs on the American side of the Great Lakes. Hog Island is part of the St. Louis River AOC.

Congress passed and the President signed the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 to address the problem of contaminated sediment in these 31 areas. The Legacy Act authorizes \$270 million in funding over five years for cleanups. Fiscal Year 2004 was the first in which Legacy Act funds were available for projects, and Congress appropriated \$10 million. For the current fiscal year, Congress appropriated \$22.3 million.